



NEWS RELEASE

Tennessee Regulatory Authority

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Consumer Advisory

BellSouth Disconnects Max-Tel: Affected Customers Should Seek an Alternative Provider

Nashville, Tennessee – The Tennessee Regulatory Authority is advising customers of Max-Tel to immediately find an alternative provider of pre-paid telecommunications services. A total of 695 customers of pre-paid local service are affected statewide.

BellSouth has informed the TRA that it has disconnected Max-Tel from the company's telecommunications network for failure to pay its bills. Max-Tel was previously a reseller of telecommunications services in Tennessee.

“Unfortunately, this is a growing problem in Tennessee and in other states and we wish that we could do more to prevent this inconvenience to consumers,” stated Deborah Taylor Tate, Chairman of the TRA.

Today's action by BellSouth may also affect customers of telecommunications service provider The Big Phone, also a provider pre-paid telecommunications services.

“In addition to investigating complaints and enforcing any penalties which may be assessed, we are proposing new rules that would require additional action by pre-paid telephone resellers--including notification to customers-- prior to disconnection. Companies should know that we will enforce all applicable laws and fine them to the fullest extent possible for failure to comply,” added Tate.

Any consumers of Max-Tel or the Big Phone, whose telephone service has been terminated, may file a complaint at www.state.tn.us/tra, or contact the TRA at 1-800-342-8359.

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